Alameda Point RAB Meeting on March 3, 2011
Highlights and Analysis

RAB members present: Dale Smith (Community Co-Chair), Joan Konrad, James Leach, Kurt Peterson, Jean Sweeney, Jim Sweeney, and Michael John Torrey. The RAB voted to approve the applications for RAB membership of three individuals: Richard Bangert, Carol Gottstein, M.D., and Daniel Hoy.

Remediation and other field work in progress:

- A Navy/EPA/University of Florida field research study is in progress at Plume 4-1, immediately north of Building 360 near Alameda Point's east entrance. The research focuses on better characterizing the solvent contamination in groundwater prior to remedy selection and design. This research should improve not only the Navy's cleanup of OU-2B groundwater, but similar contamination elsewhere.
- A pilot test of groundwater treatment at the IR Site 1 landfill, which began in October, is still underway.
- Groundwater monitoring is ongoing to assess the effectiveness of remediation at IR Site 6 (Building 41, Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Facility), IR Site 16 (Shipping Container Storage Area, in the southeast corner of Alameda Point), and IR Site 28 (Todd Shipyards).
- Radiological status surveys of selected buildings to rule out potential radiological residues are ongoing.
- The air sparge/vapor extraction system to treat groundwater contaminated with benzene and naphthalene at Alameda Point OU-5 and FISCA IR Site 2 is operating.
- Dredging of the northeast corner of Seaplane Lagoon began in early January. Dredging of Seaplane Lagoon's northeast corner is about two-thirds completed and work on the northwest corner is about to begin. The Lagoon's dredging was scheduled to continue until March 15, 2011, when it was to have been terminated due to least-tern habitat considerations. However, the Navy has experienced dredging delays due to weather, encountering hard sediments, encountering petroleum contamination in the sediments, and other factors. The Navy is negotiating an extension with California Department of Fish and Game for its dredging deadline that will allow it to dredge until the least-tern colony reappears for the season. Even with this extension, it is unclear the dredging can be completed without remobilizing after the least terns have departed in the fall.

San Francisco Estuary Institute's Regional Monitoring Program

Ms. Karen Taberski of the Water Board presented to the RAB an outline of SFEI's Regional Monitoring Program for water, sediment, and fish tissue. The RMP is a collaborative effort between SFEI, the Water Board, and the regional discharger community. It provides water quality regulators with information they need to manage the Estuary effectively. Among other points she made during this interesting and informative talk, is that sediment in Oakland Harbor is of relatively poor quality. Although these deteriorated sediment conditions may also exist

within Oakland Inner Harbor on the north side of Alameda Point, that would not be the case on Alameda Point's south side. There, with open exposure to San Francisco Bay, sediment conditions would be comparable to the cleaner sediment quality of the Bay in general.

OU-2A Draft Final Feasibility Study

The Navy presented a review of the remedial alternatives that are being evaluated in the FS for OU-2A in the southeast area of Alameda Point. OU-2A consists of IR Site 9 (Paint Stripping Facility), IR Site 13 (Former Oil Refinery), IR Site 19 (Hazardous Waste Storage), IR Site 22 (Former Service Station near the corner of Main Street and Pacific Avenue), and IR Site 23 (Missile Rework Operations/Former Plane Defueling). Cleanup options for soil at localized areas of IR Sites 9 and 22 are evaluated, with excavation and off-site disposal the likely option to be selected.

Relatively low levels of VOCs (solvents) in groundwater at IR Sites 9 and 19 and somewhat higher levels of benzene (petroleum-related) at IR Site 13 are evaluated. In-situ treatment likely will be selected for IR Site 13's benzene, but the two VOC groundwater plumes present a more difficult decision. In-situ treatment of these plumes would achieve remedial goals in about 10 years, rather than in about 20 years with monitored natural attenuation (doing nothing except periodic sampling to verify that levels are continuing to decrease through natural processes). However, the in-situ treatment is more expensive. The remedial decision pivots on whether the extra cost of in-situ treatment is justified by the benefit of quicker cleanup. Often the extra expense is justified when human health or the environment is threatened. However, these threats are not present here, making the decision more difficult. In the case of these VOC plumes, the clean-up goals are not set by health risk, but by legal requirement (to clean potential drinking-water supplies to potable water standards, regardless of whether anyone currently is using the water supply). It is important to note that although some residences at Alameda's West End purportedly have unauthorized water wells for irrigation, the groundwater flow direction at these VOC plumes is westward, away from the wells. Thus, the more-costly in-situ treatment of these VOC plumes reaches regulatory goals sooner, but conveys little or no benefit to public health or the environment.

Once the FS is finalized, the Navy will issue the Proposed Plan explaining its preferred remedies. After considering public comment on the Proposed Plan, the BCT will select the remedies in the Navy's Record of Decision.